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PRAGGU OUTMANOEUVRES WORLD NO 2 NAKAMURA AT WORLD CUP

R Praggnanandhaa won both rapid games to eliminate second-seeded Hikaru Nakamura to enter the last 16 of the FIDE World Cup chess

BLACK OR WHITE, CHENNAI BOY SINGS RIGHT

Friday turned out to be a fascinating day for the 18-year-old Chennai boy. After the two classical games ended in draws, Praggnanandhaa, who celebrated his birthday on Thursday, stunned the World No 2 American GM in the tie-break games with both black and white pieces. Another teenager D Gukesh also entered last 16 after beating Russia's Andrey Esipenko | PT7

ANAND, CARLSEN LAUD PRAGGU'S WIN

- Even while his game was on, former world champion Magnus Carlsen went up to Praggu to congratulate him
- India's chess legend V Anand hailed the young GM: "Praggnanandhaa does it! Eliminating one of the pre-tournament favourites Hikaru Nakamura." Vidit Gujrathi and Arjun Erigaisi too secured last 16 berths

12 years

AGE OF PRAGGNANANDHAA WHEN HE BECAME A GRANDMASTER

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

New bills for holistic revamp of criminal laws, sedition out

End of the road for colonial era laws as govt tables 3 bills in LS to replace IPC, CrPC and Evidence Act; to be vetted by House panel

AMIT MUKHERJEE @ New Delhi

COLONIAL era criminal laws, including that on sedition, headed straight for the shredder on Friday as the Centre announced their complete overhaul through three bills tabled in the Lok Sabha. They will be referred to a parliamentary committee for vetting.

Introducing the bills that replace the Indian Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Evidence Act, Union home minister Amit Shah said Section 124A (sedition) will be completely repealed but Section 150 that punishes "acts endangering sovereignty, unity and integrity of India" will stay.

Shah said the objective of the existing bills was to punish people rather than providing justice. Their replacements — The Bharitya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, the Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita 2023 and the Bharatiya Sakshya Bill, 2023 — will completely transform India's criminal justice system, he added.

Some of their salient features are maximum punishment for crimes like mob lynching and rape of minors. Besides, marrying a woman by concealing identity or having sexual relationship under false promise of marriage, promotion or employment will attract up to 10-year imprisonment.

In cases of sexual violence, the statement of the victim and video recording will be compulsory and police will have to provide status update on a case within 90 days.

Union home minister Amit Shah speaks in the Lok Sabha on Friday | PTI

Every district will have a police official who will give a certificate to the family of those arrested that they are responsible for the person. Information will have to be provided both online, and personally, the proposed law mandates.

For the first time, community service as punishment for petty offences is sought to be introduced.

Some new offences have also been included, such as armed rebellion, subversive and separatist activities or endangering the sovereignty or unity of India, Shah told the House. The aim is to raise the conviction rate to 90%, he added.

The new bill allows trials of absconders and fugitives in absentia. Also, a forensic team's visit to a crime scene has been made mandatory if the crime would attract at least seven years of imprisonment.

NEW FORMULATIONS

Whole procedure right from filing an FIR to case diary, chargesheet and judgment to be digitised

Visit by forensic team to crime scene will be mandatory if the crime entails punishment of seven years or more

3 mobile forensic science labs to be present in every district

BY 2027 ALL COURTS TO BE COMPUTERISED

- For the first time, filing e-FIRs will be possible. Zero FIR can be registered in any police station. The complaint will be sent to the police station concerned in 15 days
- In case of sexual violence, statement of the victim and video recording compulsory. Police will have to provide status update on a case within 90 days
- No government can withdraw a case entailing punishment of 7-yr jail or more without hearing the victim
- Community service to be introduced as punishment. For cases entailing less than three years of jail, summary trial will be enough
- Chargesheet deadline 90 days. Further 90 day extension with court permission. Probe must be wrapped up in 180 days. After trial, judgment in 30 days
- For filing complaints against civil servants, authorities will have to give or deny permission within 120 days. If no response, it will be deemed to be a 'yes'
- Sexual exploitation of women on the pretext of marriage, job, promotions or by hiding identity will be a crime
- For gang-rape, punishment of 20 years imprisonment or life in jail. Provision for death sentence for raping minors. For mob lynching, punishment from seven years in jail to death sentence
- Death sentence can only be converted to life; and lifer can be pardoned only within seven years of punishment
- Terrorism defined for the first time. Trial to be allowed even if the criminal is absconding - like fugitive Dawood Ibrahim

CM Siddaramaiah arrives to unveil a statue of social reformer Basaveshwara in Athani on Friday

GOVT GIVEN AUGUST 31 DEADLINE TO RELEASE DUES

The Karnataka State Contractors' Association has set the Congress government a deadline of August 31 to release Rs 25,000 crore in dues to contractors. Association president D Kempanna said sought an appointment with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Dy CM D K Shivakumar to discuss the issue. He added that they will submit evidential documents in 12 booklets to the single-man panel. P4

Contractors' bills will be cleared after probe: CM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

HITTING back at BJP, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday said that it would be unfair on the part of his government to clear the bills of contractors when a committee headed by retired judge Justice B Veerappa is conducting an inquiry into work on projects implemented by the previous BJP government.

Without the completion of investigation, it is not fair to release funds towards clearance of bills. Money was released for many incomplete works by the BJP government, he said. Siddaramaiah said contractors need not worry about the payment for works completed by them. "We are not for any commission money, but against those who took commission. There is no question of sparing anyone," he said.

In a series of tweets, Siddaramaiah stated that the government will not stop the inquiry. "Our government is after those who are involved in corruption," he added.

Siddaramaiah said during the campaign for May 10 Assembly elections, the Congress party had promised to unearth all scams that took place during the BJP rule. "Voters of Karnataka trusted us and voted us to power. It's time to keep our promise. Hence, we have ordered an inquiry into the 40% commission allegation," he said.

The CM said that during the BJP rule, bills of contractors were cleared for incomplete development works. The committee will probe all scams. Contractors who have completed the works awarded to them need not worry. The government will not spare those who have not completed the works given to them but have received payments for the same, he added.

Referring to former deputy chief minister R Ashoka's allegation that the Congress government is seeking 15% commission, Siddaramaiah termed it far from truth. He, however, said that he is happy that Ashoka has reduced the commission percentage from 40 to 15. This shows that Ashoka admits that the Congress governance is better than his party's rule.

CONTINUED ON: P4

9 injured as fire breaks out at BBMP office

MOHAMMED YACOOB @ Bengaluru

A suspected chemical reaction leading to a blast caused a major fire at Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike's (BBMP) quality control cell at the civic agency's head office at NR Square on Friday evening. Nine BBMP employees sustained burns. Of them, the condition of four is said to be serious.

Eyewitnesses said the fire, which started with a blast, possibly due a reaction from the benzene stored in the quality control cell, was noticed at 5.15 pm. All the nine injured were in the quality control cell when the blast took place.

According to Additional Commissioner (West) N Sateesh Kumar, benzene used in road construction quality checks may have caused a blast due to a reaction and all the injured were rushed to St Marthas Hospital. Benzene is used to check bitumen quality and is known to be highly inflammable.

Sources in the BBMP told The New Indian Express that the blast could have occurred when benzene was poured to separate bitumen from other aggregates. Now, questions are being raised about the fire safety measures at the cell. CONTINUED ON: P3

The fire broke out after a blast caused by a chemical reaction in the quality control cell at BBMP office in Bengaluru on Friday | EXPRESS

Centre asks Indians to leave Niger at earliest

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

THE Centre on Friday issued an advisory to Indians in Niger asking them to leave the violence-hit country as soon as possible. There are about 250 Indians in the West African country where a military coup on July 26 overthrew the democratically elected government of President Mohamed Bazoum, leading to widespread protests and violence.

"Indian nationals whose presence is not essential are advised to leave the country as soon as possible," Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said. "They may bear in mind that the airspace is currently closed. When departing through a land border, utmost precautions may be taken to ensure safety and security," he added.

Bagchi appealed to all Indians stuck in Niger to ensure they are registered with the Indian Embassy in Niamey, which is providing all possible assistance for those trying to leave the country.

Deloitte flags concerns, may quit as Adani Ports auditor

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

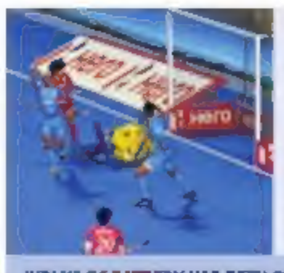
DELOITTE & Haskins LLP is likely to resign as the auditor of Adani Ports and SEZ (APSEZ) over concerns on the quality of accounts of the company, sources said. Deloitte, which has been auditing the books of APSEZ since FY18, has raised serious concerns over the allegations made by US-based Hindenburg in its report.

When contacted, the Adani Group ruled out such a possibility. A company spokesperson said there is a process to be followed for resignation, adding that they are not aware of any such process being initiated. Deloitte declined to comment.

In the recently announced first quarter results, Deloitte highlighted some transactions flagged by Hindenburg as related party transactions. It said the company did not consider it necessary to have an independent external examination of these allegations. But, in the absence of an independent evaluation it is not able to make a conclusive statement on such transactions.

Two fishy deals

Deloitte flagged two transactions in its report – an EPC purchase contract with an entity that Hindenburg said was a related party, and the sale of a container terminal in Myanmar to Solar Energy Ltd



FINAL ACT: HUNT FOR 1ST GOLD SINCE 2018

India beat Japan in the second semifinal to set up summit clash against Malaysia at the Asian Champions Trophy on Saturday

- While India may have won several medals at world stage, they haven't won gold since sharing this trophy with Pakistan in 2018
- After 5-0 win vs Japan, India believe they can down Malaysia for a second time in less than a week

INDIA'S PC BATTERY HAS BEEN ON SONG THROUGHOUT THE EVENT AND WILL BE A BIG AVENUE FOR THEM | PT7

India vs Malaysia final today: Mayor Radhakrishnan stadium, 8.30 pm

EXPRESS READ

Delhi police: Enough evidence to put Brij Bhushan on trial

New Delhi: Delhi police on Friday told a metropolitan court that there was enough evidence to put outgoing Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief and BJP MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh on trial in a case of alleged sexual harassment of women wrestlers. P17

YSR Telangana Party set to merge with Congress

Hyderabad: YS Sharmila, chief of YSR Telangana Party, is set to merge her party with Congress before the month-end, most likely on August 18, according to sources. Sharmila, who visited Delhi, is said to have held a key meeting with AICC general secretary KC Venugopal. P5

BITCOIN SCAM: FIR FILED AGAINST CCB OFFICERS

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

IN a major twist to the investigation of the multi-crore Bitcoin scam, a fresh FIR has been registered against CCB officers who investigated the case earlier.

The FIR was registered following a complaint by the Special Investigation Team (SIT), which is now probing the case, after forensic tests revealed that the seized digital devices have been tampered with.

The FIR was registered against unnamed police officers at Cottonpet police station on August 9 based on a complaint by DySP K Ravishankar, the investigation officer of the case.

According to his complaint, new files were created in five digital devices – two pen drives, two Apple MacBooks and a hard disc - belonging to the accused, after they were seized and kept in police custody.

In his complaint, the DySP stated that the police had seized the digital devices from the accused in connection with the case registered at Kempegowda Nagar police station in 2020.

The case was being handled by Bengaluru CCB sleuths. The devices were seized after the government transferred the case to SIT. The devices were sent for forensic tests which revealed creation of new files in some of them. CONTINUED ON: P5

Apex court moots panel to check hate speech

SHRUTI KAKKAR & HARPREET BAJWA @ New Delhi / Chandigarh

STRESSING that calls to boycott a particular community are not acceptable, the Supreme Court on Friday mooted the idea of setting up district-wise committees to look into hate speech. The SC asked the Centre to consider its suggestion to put in place an inbuilt mechanism to check hate speech and come back with the government's views by August 18.

A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and S V N Bhati suggested that the DGPs of states can be asked to form such panels, comprising 3-4 police officers. Hate speech complaints can be referred to these committees, which will check the veracity and then issue directions to the SHOs concerned, the bench added.

The SC was hearing a plea over alleged hate speeches targeting a particular community in Haryana, Delhi, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh. The court directed these states to file status report by next Friday.

Meanwhile, the Haryana government on Friday told the Punjab & Haryana High Court that the demolition drive in violence-hit Nuh was not 'ethnic cleansing' as suggested by the HC. It said the authorities followed due process of law.

On Monday, the HC had halted the demolition drive in Nuh, questioning if it was to drive out a particular community from the district.

On Friday, when the matter came up before it, the division bench of Justices Arun Palli and Jagmohan Bansal said it should be heard by another bench led by the chief justice and referred the matter to it.

Talking to reporters, Haryana's additional advocate general Deepak Sabharwal said the demolition drive can now resume as there is no stay.

SDPI man elected GP prez with BJP support

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Mangaluru

IN a major embarrassment to the saffron party, T Ismail, an SDPI-backed candidate was elected president of Talapady gram panchayat at Ullal on the outskirts of Mangaluru on Thursday with the help of two BJP-backed members. BJP has suspended the two members for anti-party activities.

In the 24-member panchayat, 13 are backed by BJP, 10 by SDPI and one by Congress. The lone Congress-backed member and another SDPI-backed candidate were absent during polling.

Netizens and Congress leaders criticized BJP after the two members backed by it supported the SDPI-backed candidate.

However, Dakshina Kannada district BJP president Sudarshan Moodbidri denied supporting SDPI. Of the 13 BJP-backed members, Fayaz and Mohammad were aspirants for the president's post. But the BJP selected Satyaraj as its candidate. The duo, who were upset by the BJP decision, voted for Ismail. Both SDPI and BJP bagged 11 votes each. The SDPI-backed candidate won by a toss, he said.

Meanwhile, BJP MP Tejasvi Surya tweeted that it was fake news. "Elections to panchayats don't take place on party lines. BJP has not supported SDPI or any other party in these elections," he tweeted.

SDPI clarified that it is not supporting BJP. "Since BJP has a clear majority, we sought the support of the lone Congress member, but he refused. The two members suspended by BJP voted for the SDPI-backed candidate," a SDPI leader said.

SDPI-backed candidate T Ismail was elected president of Talapady gram panchayat with support of two BJP-backed members, in Ullal, Mangaluru